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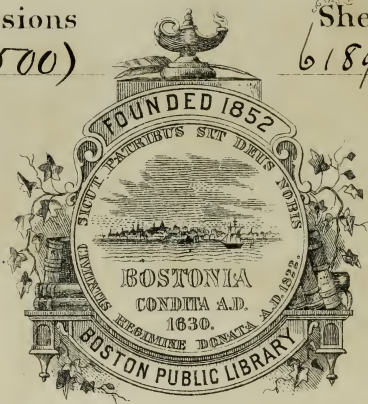


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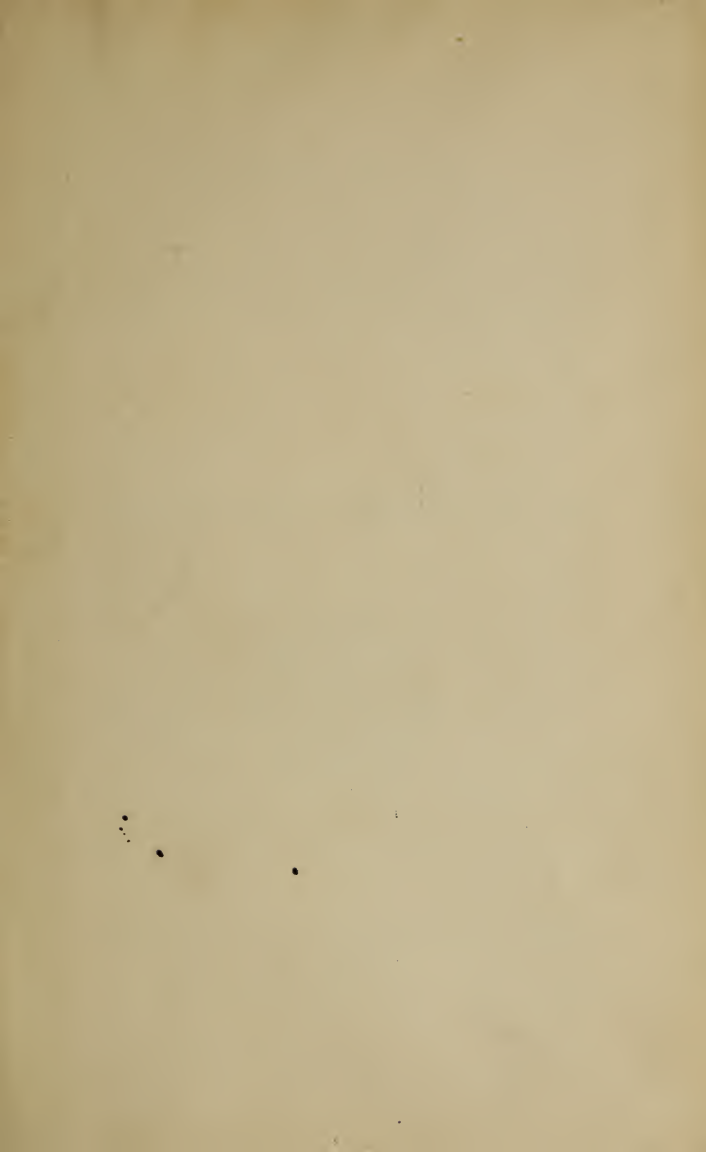
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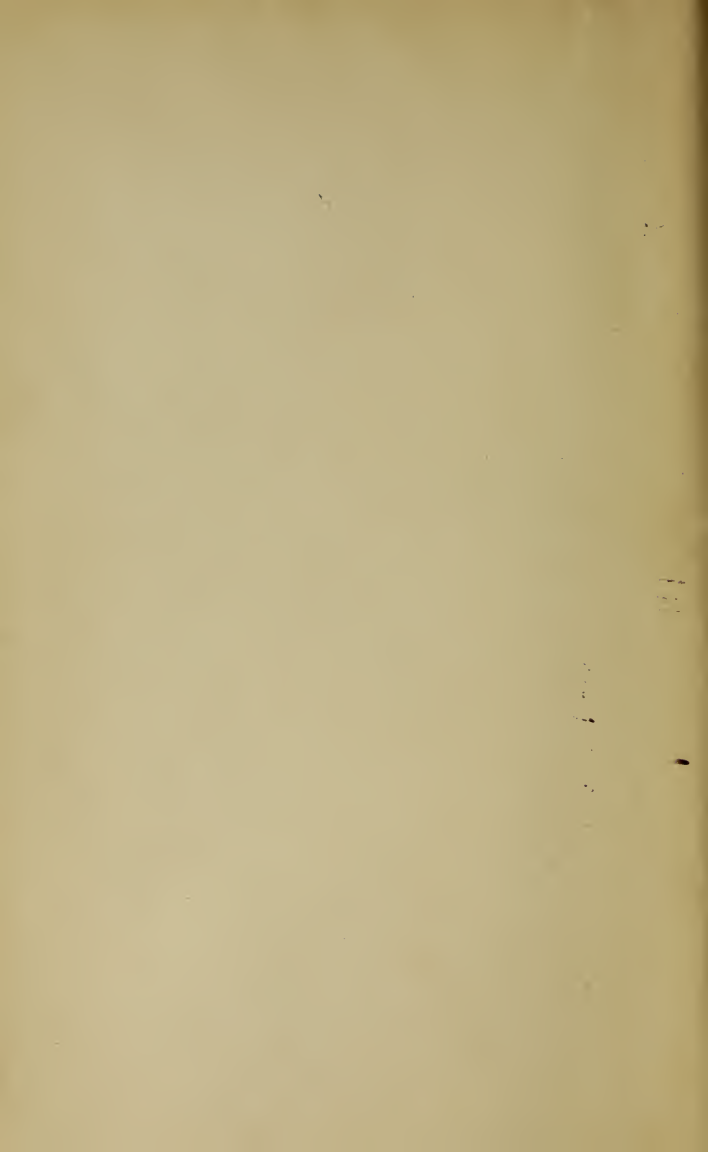
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SHIP'S  
LIBRARIES,

THEIR  
NEED AND USEFULNESS.



*THIRD THOUSAND.*

AMERICAN SEAMEN'S FRIEND SOCIETY,  
80 WALL STREET, NEW YORK.

The substance of this Monograph was read at the SEMI-CENTENARY of the AMERICAN SEAMEN'S FRIEND SOCIETY, May 6th, 1878, and is printed in its present form for general circulation, by consent of its author, JOHN S. PIERSON, Esq., Marine Agent of the New York Bible Society,

# SHIP'S LIBRARIES.

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IN discussing this interesting topic, I may be allowed to premise, that my acquaintance with ship's libraries comes from my having had for sixteen years the pleasant duty of selecting the books of which they are composed, and from the abundant opportunities which my position has afforded me of noticing, for a still longer period, their working on shipboard.

What I have to say will naturally fall under three heads:

The *need* there is for ship's libraries.

The principles controlling the *choice of books* for ship's libraries.

The *results* of ship's libraries; or how they help the sailor.

I. What call is there for this heavy expenditure for ship's libraries, what want does it supply, and what position does the work take among the various benevolent schemes for the benefit of the sailor? In considering this point, we will concede to all these whatever success they may be disposed to claim. Let us go farther, and suppose that the State and the

Church have done their best for the sailor; that there are protective laws which do really protect him; and that public sentiment has compelled just and generous treatment for him from commerce.

You have taken good care, now, of the sailor while on shore. You have kept him from the grog-shop and the wretched den of shame and robbery. In the model "sailor's boarding-house" you may even have given him a healthy reminder of home in the near glimpse of blessed womanhood and children. He has been spiritually fed, and stimulated to good, at the Seamen's Church and prayer meeting; and finally, with the surplus of his wages sent home to his family or lodged in the Savings Bank, and with a chest of comfortable clothing for the coming voyage, he has been honestly shipped on the vessel of his choice. Nay more, you have been on board his ship before him, to see that there is honest timber under his feet,—not a rotten hulk "sold to the Insurance Companies," and ready to break up when the storm comes and drop him into the abyss. His quarters too have been inspected; and if there is no place for him in the house on deck, the triangular den under the bowsprit is seen to be dry, and as roomy as the rapacious needs of the cargo will allow. And there is good sweet beef and pork in the provision barrels; and biscuit only once baked, without trace of weevil, in the bread lockers; and the coffee is not "burnt crust and beef's liver," (as I once heard an English sailor assert,—let us hope without warrant); and there are even stores of vegetables and flour and



canned meats and dried fruits provided, to modify the sternness of the ship's rations. And now having done the best you could for him during his brief holiday on shore, you have bid him a hearty farewell, and he is off on a voyage of twelve months to China or the Pacific.

How now can you follow him for his good, through the long period of his work-day life on the blue water; where too frequently according to the well known saying there is "no Sunday," no church-going bell, no sacred song, no sermon? Obviously the only way left to reach him is by the *printed truth*,—the Bible, the tract, the good book. Just *here then comes in the ship's library* with its indispensable offices,—the last important advance made in the line of religious work among seamen,—the "missing link," I think we may call it, in the chain of evangelical agencies for their benefit.

What rank it holds among these agencies, we will better understand if we remember two facts: (1), that the field thus left for the occupancy of the ship's library, embraces fully three-fourths of the sailor's year; and (2), that this period of seclusion on the sea, presents just the best opportunity his life affords, for doing him good mentally and religiously.

There is a large class of seamen common in our chief seaports,—men whose family ties have been severed by many years of knocking about on ship and ashore,—to whom the sea has at last become a home: they are only visitors on the land. Too often

when such a man steps ashore and is paid off, the restraints and deprivations of a long voyage only make him the more ready victim to bad influences which blot out almost his very manhood. As you listen to his drunken blasphemies, and try, in vain, to draw him away to better associations, you are inclined to pronounce him a hopeless case. At last after his fortnight of delirious excitement, he finds himself, he scarcely knows how, on board ship bound out. He is back again in his home in the fore-castle. Now wait a little, till the fumes of the liquor have disappeared, till his bruised eye has healed, till he has come to know his shipmates and officers, and got into the grooves of the daily routine of a ship at sea,—and presently you cannot recognize in the steady, grave, respectable jack-tar, the begrimed, foolish fellow of the Water street bar-room a month before.

In such a case, *the real man is to be found at sea*; and there, we insist, you must follow him, if you would have the best chance of doing him good. Capt. Chisholm's letter in the SAILORS' MAGAZINE is to the point here:

“Library No. 4,674. With much pleasure I return this library from bark *Western Sea*. The books have been read and highly appreciated by all. *It is my opinion that there is no better way of reaching the spiritual wants of the sailor, than through the system of Loan Libraries.* It is unfortunately the case that the sailor goes headlong to ruin, spending his few days on shore in the abodes of vice and crime. When his money is gone and he is friendless and penniless, he embarks upon the ocean, where he has ample time to reflect upon the past, and if he is fortunate enough to be on board a vessel

where a Loan Library has been placed, he there finds instruction suited to his wants and often returns to port a *changed man*."

The frequent result of this undivided attention to the one great subject, is indicated in the following letter from Capt. Bray of the ship *Regent*.

"I have been in several ships that have had your libraries on board, but I have never seen one so much used as this has been on this passage. I have no doubt but that they have a great influence for good upon sailors, giving them profitable employment for many spare hours. After being at sea for months without anything new to divert the mind, nearly any subject will interest, and if a sailor can once be induced to give his attention to religion, I have noticed that the result is nearly always his conversion."

The sea is the place for sober thought. The sublime, solemn surroundings of water and sky invite it. The distractions and the temptations of the shore are not there to prevent it. In every day, and especially in the silent night-watch, there are hours, when the sailor forbidden to sleep, is shut up to it: when the mind is ransacked for something to occupy it, and when—should religious truth be present from the recent reading of the book from the ship's library,—it will receive an attention quite impossible on shore.

Consider farther, in order to appreciate the splendid field which an interesting book has at sea, *the monotony of ship life* during a long voyage, as described by more than one voice from the fore-castle;—into which comes no mail, no daily newspaper, no fresh face, or voice to enliven, as on shore. Where the only

reading may be an old song-book, or a dime novel or two, ("a crew of ordinary intelligence and *only one book* in the fore-castle," is the report in one case;)—the amusements, a greasy pack of cards, the oft repeated yarn, and that unfailing resource with the sailor, grumbling at trifles. When shipmates tire of each other, and become irritable by mere attrition:—when a remark from the Captain, a new dish at dinner, the appearance of the sick passenger on deck, or the sight of a distant sail, is an event: and when a storm is welcomed as breaking up a stagnation which would be unendurable were it not for the blessed recurrence, every day, of the work that must be done.

Think now what a boon a ship's library, with its three dozen interesting books must be, dropped into the dreary sameness of such a life;—like the breeze which came at last to break the enchanted calm with its hideous scenery, in "The Ancient Mariner."

We all remember the description given in Dana's "Two years before the Mast," of his delight at receiving on the coast of California a half dozen Boston newspapers a year old: how he read and re-read them, from beginning to end,—“houses to let, things lost or stolen, auction sales and all.”

This is abundantly illustrated by the reports from libraries afloat, which appear in the SAILORS' MAGAZINE. One Captain testifies emphatically, that "*seamen will read religious books at sea who would not think of such a thing ashore.*" Here is the report from the *Abby Bradford*, whaler:

“ Nearly nine months in winter quarters in the ice off Marble Island. Fifty-five men were thrown almost entirely upon the library for reading matter. The books were eagerly devoured. There were 1,375 issues of books, averaging 45 books to each man. The ‘ Pastor of the Desert ’ was issued 97 times: ‘ Deacon Sim’s Prayer,’ 83 times.”

Besides vessels at sea, other points almost as lonely are reached by the libraries of the Society. Here is “ Forty Mile Point,” a *Station of the U. S. Life Saving Service*, upon Lake Huron, where during the stormy seasons, seven or eight men live in a cabin “ situated 17 miles from any other dwelling, on a wild coast, with an impenetrable wood in the rear.”

And another station, at “ Good Ground, Long Island,” cut off from the main land by two miles of water; where we are not surprised to learn, that “ the days and weeks pass slow and heavy;” and that the library does much to “ relieve the monotony of the winter months.”

The report from the station at “ Sturgeon Point,” on Lake Michigan, is grateful and enthusiastic:

“ *What a change there is in the occupation* of our crew since the library came among us. Before, the evenings and spare moments were occupied in reading novels, arguing, and in other ways not calculated to improve the morals of the men. Now how changed! Each man of the crew seated around the fire, with a book of good character, deeply interested in its perusal.”

II. In *making up the Library*, four ends are to be kept in view, distinct in themselves, yet, often blended in fact in individual books. I name them in the reverse order of their importance: (1) recrea-

tion, (2) humanization, (3) the culture and storing of the mind, (4) religious instruction and impression.

1st. *Recreation and amusement.* Though a minor object, it is yet one which we all recognize as legitimate in our own reading, and we need scarcely vindicate its place in the grimy toilsome life of the sailor. Even a bit of healthy humor, once in a while, will not be grudged him;—as when “Capt. Waters, and Bill his Bo’son” display a seaman’s ingenuity in applying sea methods to shore necessities, on that sailor’s “Arcadia,”—a farm. Farther, with dull uneducated minds (not to speak of those who have yet to be induced to learn to read), the first point is, to awaken a taste for reading. When that is once formed, the somewhat sensational story or narrative, with its pictures, exciting curiosity and compelling a perusal, may be expected to give place to the more solid book of history or travel.

2nd. *Civilizing, softening, humanizing* books: books that healthily touch the imagination and the heart. The sailor, removed for so great a part of his life from the influences of society and the family, tends to become rough and coarse in his habits and tastes, and hard and material in his views of things. Whatever raises the head and heart to their proper position of supremacy over the animal nature, or enlarges for him the domain of the ideal and the spiritual, is therefore specially beneficial to the sailor. This class of influences is probably referred to in the letter accompanying the return of Library No. 4,815,—which after reporting “four cases of awakening, and all the men improved,” proceeds:

“As grass grows and trees blossom in the spring, so men from a low social level or the depths of misery, when brought in contact with a purer atmosphere, are improved in every way. \* \* \* I admire the efforts that are made for seamen through these libraries.”

*Poetry* comes in under this head, of the more simple or narrative kinds, of which Cowper, Scott, Longfellow may be named as types.

Also *Fiction*,—though under severe restrictions as to character and amount. This question of the proper use of fiction is one of some difficulty, much more easily solved in practice, by good sense and right feeling, than settled abstractly in its metes and bounds. The value of fiction as a powerful solvent, whether of truth or error, is well recognized. How impressively religious truth may be presented by it, is illustrated in such books as the “Pilgrim’s Progress,” “The Schönberg-Cotta Family,” “Stepping Heavenward,” etc.; and though terribly overdone in the case of Sunday-school literature,—such books as “Pierre and his Family,” “Christy’s Old Organ,” “The Oil Feather Series,” and the like, still vindicate its moderate use in the religious teaching of simple minds.

From the large mass of juvenile books not directly religious, many can be selected (of the “Swiss Family Robinson” type), healthy in tone, correct in statement, and admirably adapted to the lower needs of the ship’s library.

Greater caution must of course be used, where fiction deals mainly with social and domestic life. The novel, in the popular meaning of that word,

does not find place in the ship's library. We cannot help Jack to the love-story of which he is so fond: for the loan of which he will give half of his tobacco, and then take a biscuit and a bit of beef for his dinner, and go aside to read it. Though we do not suppose that such a book, if pure though weak, will do him any special injury. The enchantment, the "unreal views of life," will not unfit him for *his* particular daily duties,—hauling at the ropes, laying out upon the yard, or swabbing down the deck; while he will be refreshed by the reading, and lifted for the moment out of the region of the material and the gross. We even venture to avow, that when in an occasional volume in the ship's library it comes in incidentally, and in connection with sound religious teaching, high principles, and correct views of life, we do not object to a little bit of the romance, which is so abundant a feature in actual life. A glimpse into that fairy world, where pure affection reigns, and where wife and children appear in the background, will do the sailor no harm, especially if it suggests, that if he play the man, and resist temptation, and save his wages, he may perhaps come to know it in its actuality.

*Books of heroism.* The story of magnificent endeavor, or of steady endurance, whether in the way of Christian duty and benevolence, or in the pursuit of any worthy end, have a great attraction for the sailor, and do him especial good. Certainly, in his constitution there is no lack of courage and heroism. These are every day virtues with him. Yet as matters



mainly of impulse and habit, they lack the dignity belonging alone to the reasonable acts of that higher nature, which "looks before and after."

Let him read, now, such a book as "Kane's Arctic Explorations," and mark the deliberate self-devotion to a great purpose; or better still, Gilmore's thrilling account of the exploits of the "Storm Warriors of the Goodwin Sands," or "Livingstone's Travels," or the "Life of Bishop Pattison," or of "Richard Williams," of the heroic but ill-fated Patagonian Mission, and see there the love of the Master appearing as the moving principle throughout,—and he gets a new idea. A rational motive for self-sacrifice in the hour of danger, is presented, in love to man and duty to God; and also, a rational ground of support, in the care of the Father over the bodies and souls of his children engaged in his service. So that now, his heroic impulses may act themselves out understandingly and with self-approval, and harden into principle. I doubt not that more than one high-minded young man has been attracted savingly towards religion by this very aspect of it, as supplying the true theory for a life of noble doing.

*The pathetic* is another influence of power with the sailor. Though an overstrained sense of manliness forbids the expression of natural feeling, yet the sailor has a heart responsive, more than most men's, to the thrill of such words as Mother, Home, Heaven. The author of "Jessica's First Prayer" is reported to have avowed, that in her books, written mainly for the rougher classes of the English poor,

her endeavor ever was first to make the reader weep; on the theory, I suppose, that the nearest road for religious truth to the intellect and the will lies through the heart, and that, when the crust, which coarse surroundings and habits of stolid endurance have built up around the centre of feeling, is broken through by tears, spiritual influences may rush in at the gap. Some of the best of religious fiction, such books as "The Little Captain," or "Nelly's Dark Days" or "Wee Davie," have proved very effective with the sailor, perhaps on this principle.

And just here, I may say, that I think it a good point in these ship's libraries, that so many of them come from *Sunday-schools*; and that others are *memorials of affection* for some one loved and lost.

For example, Library No. 5,821 is labelled,

"Central Presbyterian Sunday-School, Class 3. These books have been sent by a class of young girls, who lovingly trust that they may assist to while away many a weary hour upon the deep, and that through their instrumentality some poor wanderer may find the harbor of Eternal Peace."

In each of the one hundred libraries presented by the Countess of Aberdeen, in memory of her son, drowned while an officer upon an American vessel, a brass plate is placed with an inscription stating this fact. In some cases, a photograph of the young donors, or of the deceased, appears on the inside of the door of the library.

A healthy conjunction this, of the child and the sailor; this bringing of the warm atmosphere of home into the fore-castle, to prove to him that

though absent, he is not forgotten,—that in many a family even the children are praying for him. How natural the feeling in return, expressed in the following sailor's letter :—

“It was so kind in that dear little girl, who provided this library for our poor sailors. May God bless her and provide for her welfare, as she has done for us! When I take a book to read, I feel as though the spirit of that good girl was in the midst of it, and that it was her, who placed it before me.”

Or in this:

“I think every true sailor can say candidly that the Loan Libraries have done an immense deal of good in reforming seamen. *Thanks to the dear children* that denied themselves so many things, and saved their pennies to buy books for sailors. If they would all unite in a simple, child-like prayer to the Lord Jesus for the conversion of the abundance of the sea—I have great faith in children's prayers.”

3rd. *Books of solid information*, form the principal item in the one-third part of the library allotted to secular literature.

Two or three volumes of voyages and travels; always a history of the United States, or a book on the late Civil War, (still a fresh topic and interesting to most sailors); a stimulating bit of biography, a kind of book, recently urged upon the Society by a Chaplain in the Navy; always a volume upon some ocean topic, “Great Shipwrecks,” “The Sea and Sailors,” “The Bottom of the Sea;” the “Christian Almanac;” and finally, the indispensable “Geography and Atlas.” This last is perhaps the most used book in the library. Former voyages are explained by its aid; or the ship's course for the time being, is rudely

pricked down upon its maps; or it is called in to settle an argument as to the latitude of some seaport, etc. A dispute (backed possibly by a bet) is the staple excitement of the fore-castle, upon almost any topic,—the meaning of the name of a passing vessel,—the spot where Capt. Cook was killed,—whether the fleet or the army took Savannah,—whether Napoleon was personally a brave man, etc.,—and recourse is had to the Dictionary (which I should have mentioned as invariably included in the library), or to the Atlas, or History, as the umpire in the case.

And here I must not omit to say that the claims of *the cabin* are not forgotten. Not only are they borne in mind in the whole construction of the Library, but often a book of a superior class, perhaps in some department of science or natural history, is added, for the special use of an interested reader in that quarter; “Dana on Corals,” for instance, or a volume on physical geography, or one by Gosse on marine fauna or flora. No class of men see more of nature’s wonders, than seamen; and none could render, with so little effort, such valuable services, were they only trained to observe and report what they meet with. Much of our knowledge of ocean phenomena has come from this source; as did also, up to the beginning of the present century, our information about many remote corners of the earth. I call to mind an American captain, who was a corresponding member of a scientific association in England, honored for his valuable communications, made from time to time.

4th. *Religious books.* The greatest attention, of course, is given to the selection of these: for, though it is much to refresh, to form a taste for reading, to humanize, to educate, the noblest aim of the ship's library is the conversion of the soul. All other ends are made subordinate to, and intended to lead up to this. And we think they do so. A Sailor gives his testimony thus:—

“I read “*Naval Heroes,*” and whatever was not religious; but pretty soon *I had to come down to the religious books;* and by reading these and hearing the captain's talk on Sunday, the light gradually came to me.”

First, of course, in the list of religious books comes the Bible; then the Bible Dictionary, and the volume of commentary, to explain it; then the book of popular sermons, Spurgeon or Moody (a name of power on the sea, as ashore), with the book of Hymns and Tunes; forming together an apparatus for the Sunday service or the Bible class. A volume on Temperance follows; one on Infidelity (by Nelson, or Patterson, or Cooper); with books to build up the Christian, and to arouse the careless,—(by Alexander, or Ryle, or James, or Goulburn),—these last chosen with the greatest pains, to present the truth winningly, powerfully, clearly, and to give, to the anxious inquirer especially, the most skillful and experienced guidance. Then come religious biography and narrative, with selections from the best of Sunday-school fiction,—the “*story-book*” in fact, which Jack always asks for first, but which, as he lays it down in thoughtful mood and with moistened

eye, he finds to be something more than a story. And lastly, a religious book in German, Danish, and Swedish, and often in Italian or Spanish.

As to the quality of the books, the aim has ever been to make the ship's library, as far as the limit of cost will permit, *a collection of choice reading*, of books of tested power, of recognized interest. We believe in the superior value of first class books, even with simple readers. True, a poor book, in the dearth of reading at sea, will be read; but it does only the work of a poor book. One gun properly shotted and aimed, is worth a dozen charged carelessly, and pointed at no particular mark; so a book that shall present such a picture of a single duty, or great truth, as shall ensure its never being forgotten, is better than any amount of goodish talk, the faint impressions of which are wiped out by the next occupation. Biographies show that single books have played important parts in many a man's mental or spiritual development. Especially does this happen with sailors, for the reason plainly, that a book has so fair a field at sea. It is of necessity read slowly and with ample intervals for digestion; and if it have just the needed message, and can tell it, it may prove to be the "unus liber," that takes possession of the man and moulds his after life.

III. And thus we are brought to our third topic, the *good resulting from ship's libraries*,—their success as a benevolent work;—which we have only space to sum up briefly. And we might do this, almost entirely in the words of sea-faring men them-

selves, as abundantly supplied in the monthly columns of the SAILORS' MAGAZINE; for no scheme of benevolence has ever received more enthusiastic endorsement from the class it was intended to benefit.

Captains with good opportunities for observation, do not hesitate to affirm a general improvement slowly progressing in the character of our seamen, and to name the ship's library as prominent among the causes. Says Capt. H.:

"I find that *good books and kind treatment* are the starting point for making sailors Christians. The fact is whoever reads one or more of these books must be improved some, as they are all good and valuable."

But to go into detail,—the ship's library is *the sailor's common school*, supplying, when there has been a lack of early advantages, the apparatus for self-education. Cases of sailors learning to read by its help are often mentioned. "Two Danes learned to read English," is the record in one instance. If there be on board a smart young sailor, determined to rise in his profession, and with his eye upon the berth of second mate next voyage, the library will be his fast friend and helper.

The ship's library *doubles the value of Sunday to the sailor*, elevating the day of physical rest into a day also of mental and religious refreshment. Without this, the comparative leisure it affords, may even work positive harm. This last thought comes out in two reports from Captains, as follows:

"It is a grand thing to have the seaman's mind occupied on the Sabbath. The rest of the week we keep him employed." "*Good reading fills a void* which otherwise would be filled by Satan."

And so it results again that the ship's library *replaces bad books, and stops gambling*. Says Capt. Higgins of the brig *Frank Attwood* (library 5,066):

“When the men got out their cards, I told them I had some good books. They put away their cards, and read the books, and they did not get them out again, but read the books and liked them.”

Another report states:

“The books have been read with great interest by the majority of the crew, and the influence and respect which they have commanded, has forbidden even the appearance of that light trash which is so often to be found on shipboard.”

It *furnishes pleasant occupation for a holiday*. Or as a Captain puts it, from his own experience:

“In port, it kept my sailors on board ship, when otherwise they would have been ashore, perhaps drinking, carousing and getting into the lock-up.”

In another case the Captain boasts that at Malaga the library kept his men on board in spite of the attractions of a bull-fight; so that on Monday morning they were ready to go to work as usual, while those of a neighboring vessel were coming on board late, cut and used-up generally, through a fight with the police and a night in the guard-house.

It *effectually preaches temperance*. Under the powerful impressions of such a book as “The Black Valley Railroad,” many a sailor will make a solemn vow (destined, too often, alas, to be broken under the pressure of temptation), to drink no more; and many an honest signature is put to the Library Temperance Pledge. The reports abound with such



records as,—“Six signed the temperance pledge: twenty knocked off swearing,”—and the like.

And this leads me to name as another inevitable result of the general and continued use of the ship's library, that *it checks profanity*. I need scarcely dwell on the lamentable prevalence of this vice among seamen, and its injurious effects as an obstacle to all good influences. I have heard it soberly asserted in high quarters, that an officer must swear to make himself obeyed on board ship. With the irreligious sailor, the oath is the seasoning of ordinary discourse,—slipping easily into obscenity and coarsening all social intercourse. Notice now the sweetening influence of the ship's library,—like the handful of meal cast into the poisonous pottage.

“One good effect I noticed, we seldom or ever heard profane language on board our ship.”

“Library No. 3,990. Books read by all hands. I have not heard an oath from any of our men since the library came on board. The men used to swear and drink. I think it a blessed thing to have these good books to read, for it keeps the mind occupied, and keeps the men from vice.”

“The morals of the crew greatly changed;—swearing, which could be heard at all times now but little used. The Bible is read more; and often in the dog-watches, four or five men will group together between the guns, and sing all the hymns they know.”

These reports come mostly from the cabin. Perhaps if the fore-castle were to speak, it could testify of like improvement, in many cases, *aft*. And when the officers cease swearing, then we may more readily believe in the next good effect claimed for the

ship's library, viz: that *it promotes good feeling on board ship, and good discipline.* It does this, not only by lessening the irritating element of harsh words, so often leading to harsh deeds, but by bringing in also the direct influence of kindly acts. When the crew go aft, Sunday morning, to select and exchange books, at the library hanging, say, in the mate's room,—perhaps with his aid and advice,—there is a suspension for the time of the standing feud between the two ends of the ship. The relation of the parties is a different and more pleasant one than on the week-day, and the effect does not at once pass away. So the library is a peacemaker; thus, as in many other ways, making itself felt as a gracious presence on shipboard.

Perhaps the rationale of this whole matter cannot be better stated than it is in the following letter of Capt. Barrett, dated Nov. 21st, 1873:

“Your library No. 4,598, put on board the *Agnes*, in August last, has been with us to Cuba and back. The crew with one or two exceptions did not use it much, not knowing the English language. But the mates, and particularly the chief mate, made very good use of it, reading quite a large portion of the books. I found several of the books interesting to myself, and have got a higher conception of the usefulness of your library work. Anything that will divert seafaring men's minds from themselves is a great benefit. From their isolated position they live too much within themselves, and brood too much over their wrongs real or imaginary. This begets selfishness and revengeful feelings, and gets the whole inner man ‘out of gear.’ Good medicine are the libraries, and surely not bad to take. *They are hygienic as well as remedial*, for I doubt not many a row or quarrel has been prevented by the

library books turning away the currents of bad feeling. If but few of a ship's company read them the whole are more or less leavened by the subtle influence thereby diffused. I hope the means will be furnished for you to put one or more on every ship. In time you will raise a generation of reading sailors."

The ship's library is *a living argument with the sailor, for the genuineness of religion* on shore; something he is often disposed to doubt. These books at least, are not "a money-making affair." Here, without cavil, is unselfish labor for his welfare. So, as a farther result, the heart is opened towards future influences from the same source. The angry Esau-like feeling which makes the sailor willing to live apart in the desert, with the bitter cry "No one careth for my soul," yields to the conviction that his place in the family circle of christian brotherhood is kept open for him, with the desire that he should occupy it, and that kindly wistful thoughts follow him, at any rate, in his wanderings. The testimony of Capt. Barrell of the schr. *H. L. Whiton*, is to the point, here.

"Library No. 4,598. The books have been well read and carefully handled by three different crews, on my vessel. Their general effect has been decidedly good. Valuable seed has been sown, of which the angels will reap the harvest, in due time. *The libraries are our Sea Post-Office.* By them the friends of the sailor keep up a correspondence with him, and he, in a manner, lives among them. Thus he cannot but be made to feel that he is cared for, and considered of some value, in the community. The result is undoubtedly a growing self respect. Hoping that the library work may prosper, and be the means of bringing many of the wandering sons of the Ocean, into the kingdom of our Lord,—I am, &c."

The ship's library *cheers and strengthens the Christian sailor* during his long absences on the sea, and is a substitute for christian society and church privileges. In the language of one such,

“These books are a great comfort. In them we have the advice and consolation of many eminently pious men and sincere followers of the Lamb. If we cannot meet as we should like to do in the house of God,—by your assistance in giving us good books, we can enjoy his presence on the deep, in reading his Holy Word, and listening to his servants, who though dead, speak by their writings.”

The ship's library is the arsenal, from which the “sea missionary” (to use the expressive and favorite term of the Society) draws his supplies. In the case of the backsliding professor revived by its influence, it suggests the duty of taking an aggressive position, and furnishes, with the Bible and the tract, the basis for christian work on shipboard. Its frequent result is the prayer meeting in the fore-castle, or the Sunday service in the cabin. And this leads me to name lastly, its crowning benefit.

Ship's libraries have done a great work in *promoting revivals of religion at sea*, and have been largely *blessed to the conversion of sailors*. Testimonies to this effect abound. One report says:

“The greater number of the books are well adapted to lead a young convert to Jesus; and *eight out of nine* of my ship mates have been led to Christ.

A pious sailor on the ship *Dauntless*, writing from San Francisco, closes his account of the religious revival during the voyage thither, as follows:

“I know that God has heard the prayers that have been

offered up by the 'Church of the Sea and Land' for the *Dauntless*. I can safely say that *all on board* have given their hearts to Jesus. The mate was the first. I have made a good collection for the seamen's library, \$38."

A. B. W., Lieut. U. S. N., writes from the U. S. S. *Potomac* as follows:

"I feel it obligatory upon me to make a report of the libraries Nos. 5,577 and 5,578, which you so kindly sent me some three months since. I have had charge of the books, and served them out and exchanged them every Sabbath evening. They have been read with the greatest avidity, and many of the men have told me of the beneficial effect which the perusal of certain books had had upon their minds. They speak of your Society with the greatest affection, and quite a number have expressed to me their intention of sending you a donation as soon as they get some money ahead, upon the Paymaster's books. We have lately had nearly two hundred men on board. *Twenty have been hopefully converted* and are now bright, happy, resolute christians. Quite as many more have been seriously awakened, and I have no doubt will soon be rejoicing with their messmates in a newly-found Redeemer. Fifty-one men have signed the temperance pledge, many of them having been drunkards for years. I believe a large majority of them will faithfully keep their pledges."

The following is from a sailor on the Bark *Gem*, that sailed for Goree, Africa, with Library No. 2,025 on board:—

"Immediately upon leaving, four of us took our stand as defenders of the cause of our blessed Lord. On account of the heavy weather, we could not commence our meetings as soon as we could wish. At last I could stand it no longer, and I went to the captain, who, by the way was a very irreligious man, and asked him in a polite manner if he would allow me to have prayer meetings in the fore-castle. He replied, "Yes; pray all you want to." This encouraged me greatly;

so at four bells I opened our first meeting. Inside, might be seen half a dozen seamen bending in prayer to Almighty God. At the fore-castle door the other watch were looking in with mouths and ears wide open. Presently the officers come along and look in, and at last the captain himself looks in. The meeting closed, but not without having sown good seed, the taking root of which I knew not then, but was destined to know soon afterward.

“The next day I went to the captain, and presented him with the large and beautiful picture of “The Black Valley Railroad” chart, which you gave me before I went away. He took it, unrolled it, and looked at it, and hung it up in the cabin, where all could see it, at the same time remarking, “You can hold your prayer-meetings in the cabin hereafter, if you wish.” Glory to God, his heart was touched. Taking him at his word, our next prayer-meeting was held in the cabin, all hands present, captain and all. The captain was much affected during the meeting, weeping very much. Thus matters went on till New Year’s Day. Then the captain could stand it no longer, but called all hands aft and told them his mind, and laid down his rules: 1st. No swearing. 2nd. Attend the meetings. 3d. No washing or mending on Sunday, &c., &c.

“We arrived at Goree safely. The first thing that the captain did was to go ashore and buy a lot of blue and white bunting for a Bethel flag. I made the flag, and there, at the main-mast head, it proudly floated, and there it will float the next voyage as it did the last. We remained on the coast of Africa about eight months, doing a great deal of good, assisting the missionaries, &c. On our passage home, two of our crew died, one a fine young man; he fell asleep in Jesus. His last words were, ‘I am going home to Jesus.’ You see *here was a vessel that went out in a godless state, and came back all hands Christians, and the Bethel flag at her mast head, all through the influence of Library No. 2,025.* God bless your efforts.”

The following account of a remarkable revival at

sea, is taken from a private letter of Capt. F. C. Duncan, to his father in New York, dated Bombay, February 11th, 1872:—

“There is one thing that I wish to write you about, which I know will cause you to bless God. During the past two months (at sea) it seemed as though He Himself was in our ship, for the mate, the carpenter, the cook, and ten of the sailors have become Christians. I have sometimes felt an indescribable awe when walking the deck Sunday evenings, to hear hymns rising from different parts of the ship in totally different languages; here a group of Swedes led by the carpenter, there a few Dutchmen praising God in their tongue, and so on through all the languages of Northern Europe. It commenced with the conversion of the carpenter, through the instrumentality of the second mate, who is a member of the Mariner's Church, in Catharine Street, N. Y. Thence the movement spread until it became awful. Men at work in the rigging crying like children—a subdued, half-expectant, half wondering feeling seemed to pervade the ship. All conversation seemed turned to religious subjects, and I can conscientiously affirm that I've not heard an oath from officers nor men for three months. The mate held out a long time, but at a prayer-meeting which was held in the cabin, at the request of the sailors, he publicly announced his conversion. Nearly all of our crew have signed the temperance pledge, and at that prayer-meeting to which I alluded, every person in the cabin expressed the purpose to serve God, and lead Christian lives.

“Father, I never saw a more impressive sight. There was I leading a meeting, where strong men, hardened sailors and mates, were crying like children. The mate and second mate offered up prayer, while I talked and read the Bible. The discipline of the ship remains intact. The officers are as exacting as ever and the men now work cheerfully and willingly. It is splendid to see how smoothly everything

goes on. To show you what a firm hold this religious feeling has taken of the ship's company, I will tell you what happened two nights ago, here in port. I wanted the log-book, and went to the mate's room for it. The door was closed, and I could hear a voice reading, as I thought. We had been hard at work all day discharging coals, so I concluded that the mate was in bed, and was reading aloud. I opened the door and there were the mate and second mate and one of the sailors, on their knees, while the second mate was praying aloud.

*“Thank the American Seamen's Friend Society for me, for their libraries and tracts, which have done more good than I can tell.”*

Lastly,—*Sailors gratefully appreciate ship's libraries.* They show this by their honest, careful treatment of the books; by the pains taken to return them, as a sacred trust, in due time: by their generous donations: and by their written expressions of gratitude, abounding in the printed reports.

Having amply proved its ability to serve him, whatever his religious status may be, the ship's library has established itself in the respect and affections of the sailor everywhere. Occasionally it becomes the object of a devotion quite remarkable. A sailor twice wrecked and once in hospital at St. Thomas with yellow fever, writes:—

*“And during all this time, and amid all my troubles, I have carried your Library No. 1,337, cheerfully and as carefully as I possibly could; and it has been a great joy to me and to many others, whom I happened to meet.”*

A sailor “returning the library with many thanks,” writes “on behalf of the crew of Pilot-boat *Isaac Webb*,” as follows:—



“We part with it as with *a very dear friend*, and hope and pray that—on whatever vessel it may be placed—it may be received as “*a friend*,” to the end that those on board who read it, and hear, may be led to accept of “that Friend that sticketh closer than a brother.” It has been a blessing to some, and I trust to all of us. “Old things have passed away.”—Cursing and swearing no more heard. “All things have become new.”—Meetings for prayer and divine service in the cabin, at which all attend, testify to a spiritual growth, the beginning of which—thanks be to God—most of us owe to the reading of the books furnished us.”

Of course, in such a field, there must be a heavy percentage of loss from wear and tear. A sea shipped in a storm, may wet the library along with the other furniture of the cabin; and favorite books, at the end of a long voyage may (as a sailor reports in one case) “smell pretty much of tar” from frequent handling. Unscrupulous readers too, will occasionally carry away a pet volume. So that the refitting of old libraries is a considerable item of expense. But this is all to be expected, like the ship’s regular bills for insurance and repairs. Wanton destruction or injury of books is unknown.

It is a common occurrence for *libraries to be saved in cases of shipwreck*. There are some touching anecdotes of this kind. The brig *Lucy* foundered at sea so suddenly that the crew could save only their clothing. Yet the library was not left behind, but came back to New York with only six books missing. Think of a Captain, in a similar case, writing to apologize, that owing to the suddenness of the wreck, “in getting into the boat, several of the books were left in the fore-castle!”

“In the cabin of the bark *Mary M. Bird*, at Rio, “a lighted lamp was overturned and the whole interior of the cabin was soon in flames. Saving at the peril of their lives what they could, the sailors were able to get out about two-thirds of the books: the rest they could not, nor the case, which was fastened to the cabin’s side.”

These books, with charred edges, were duly returned.

Some of the *libraries have long lives*,—another proof of the care accorded them by seamen. No. 2,135 is reported as having “sailed 41,563 miles, and been read and re-read several times by different crews.” And No. 3,022 as “eight years at sea, and read by 550 men.” No. 305, issued in 1861, after several re-fittings, was stated in April, 1878, to be still doing duty on the *Schr. Reno*.

And now in closing, I cannot do better than give a specimen or two of the benedictions which throno the path of the AMERICAN SEAMEN’S FRIEND SOCIETY, in this noble work of ship’s libraries. Take the final sentences of a sailor’s letter,—itself, almost throughout, a song of praise.

“A feeling of gratitude has often come over me while looking over the library and thinking of the unknown friends of the sailor. Be assured that earnest prayers and sincere wishes for God’s blessing upon you go up from many a vessel far away on the ocean.”

Or the following from a new convert;

“Library No. 4,591.—Sailors cannot be thankful enough to your Society, which cares for them in such a tender and loving way, because a good library of selected books of worship and religion is the greatest comfort they can have, when they are

far away from land, on the dangerous ocean. It is indeed their only comfort next to prayer. When a sailor is at sea, away from the temptation of the land, his heart is open and he is more willing to take the precious seed of the word of God into it; and it will grow and be strong, though a young tree, by the time he gets on shore again. It will enable him to resist all temptations of the Evil One and to be true to his Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. The best thing to work such reformation in a man after the seed is lodged by the hand of God, is good reading, such as is provided for any one in the libraries of your Society. Great, indeed, will be your reward for this work. You are saving the souls of many men and bringing them back to God where they will rejoice in his blessings. I know this out of my own experience. Fond of good reading as I am, I one morning took one of the books in my hands. After reading in it for some time, it awakened my interest; I finished the first one, which advised me to search in the Bible. So I did, and already I feel the touch of the hand of God, which will, as I hope, lead me to a better life.

I am now started on a new and better life, doing my best to make a speedy progress in it. I cannot express my thanks to you in words, as I would like to, but I wish the blessings of God to rest down on you, every time I pray."

We add part of a letter from a machinist on board the U. S. S. *Vandalia*, dated Ville Franche, France, Sept. 20th, 1878, and referring to Libraries Nos. 5,906, 5,907.

"The cruise of the *Vandalia* is nearly over, and we expect to hoist "the homeward-bound pennant" in about a month.

I am happy to inform you that your kind loan has been highly appreciated, and that most of the books show signs of severe wear. I regret to say that some of the books have been lost in our long cruise, but I expect to make the loss good from the secular library. Some of these books have been actually worn out. It may not be God's will that we shall here see the harvest of this goodly sowing; but, on the "other

side," we shall. Even my own short experience warrants the belief that their sweet stories of victories over sin and of the love of the Savior, are helpful, and beneficent, and altogether wise. When other helpers have failed, these silent hand-fellows have helped along the work of the Master with fealty and love. How many a sin-weary heart has been encouraged to new resolves, how many a saving truth has been conveyed to darkened minds, how many a sustaining promise made sweetly seasonable by the soul's sore need, God only knows.

In the name of the "Toilers of the Sea" I thank you for your kindly interest in us; in the name of lonely mothers who have committed their sailor boys to the care of the wanderers God I thank you;—in the names of the brothers and sisters, in the name of the dear Father who bids us "cast our bread upon the water," we bid your noble charity "GOD SPEED!"

You know the "lares and penates" in the sailor's heart sit high enthroned, and so forgive my eulogy of *the only household deity that has taken to the water*, and is become our own and faithful shipmate—the AMERICAN SEAMEN'S FRIEND SOCIETY'S Ship's Library."

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#### EVANGELISTIC WORK FOR SEAMEN.

*Fifty years ago, a sailor was everywhere dreaded like a pestilence. Among common seamen, at that time, hardly any could read or write, and there were very few pious officers or sailors. Now, there are supposed to be thirty thousand Christian seamen, afloat and ashore;—and on five hundred vessels, with more or less of regularity, Christian service is held, and worship offered unto God.*

*The American Seamen's Friend Society, by its Loan Libraries, (as well as in other ways), has had its full part in this good work, but thousands of American vessels, alone, are yet to be supplied.*

## THE LOAN LIBRARY WORK BEGAN,

Systematically, in 1858-9. Before that year a few libraries had been put upon vessels, by the Society; and some ship-owners, at times, supplied their crews with more or less reading matter, but this year witnessed the commencement of effort which has since been steadily and thoroughly prosecuted.

## THE GROWTH OF THIS WORK,

Is among the best evidences of its value. Beginning it, in 1858-9, the Society shipped in that year, ten new libraries, in 1860-1, 94; in 1861-2, 113; in 1862-3, 117; in 1863-4, 218; in 1864-5, 421; in 1865-6, 396; in 1866-7, 307; in 1867-8, 534; in 1868-9, 431; in 1869-70, 387; in 1870-1, 359; in 1871-2, 312; in 1872-3, 360; in 1873-4, 388; in 1874-5, 460; in 1875-6, 326; in 1876-7, 307; in 1877-8, 386; total, 6,252,

## EXTENT OF THE WORK.

Up to May 1st, 1878, the AMERICAN SEAMEN'S FRIEND SOCIETY had sent from its Rooms in New York and Boston, for the use of seamen,—

6,252 NEW LOAN LIBRARIES.

The total number of volumes in these libraries, was 322,644. From this whole number of libraries, there have been

5,175 RESHIPMENTS,—

each library so reshipped usually going out three or more times.

The books so sent out, have been available to over

245,989 SEAMEN.

# SPECIMEN LIBRARY.

:o:

- The Holy Bible, (12mo).
- Bible Dictionary, (Am. Tr. Society) 12mo., 534 pp., illust'd, 5 maps.
- Jesus of Nazareth, Life and Teachings, (Lyman Abbott), 12mo., 522 pp.,  
28 maps and cuts.
- House of Israel, (Miss Warner), 16mo., 501 pp.
- Moody's Boston Sermons, 12mo., 534 pp.
- Fifteen Years of Prayer, (S. I. Prime), 12mo., 345 pp.
- The Lost Found, (W. M. Taylor), 12mo., 176 pp.
- Secret of the Lord, (Anna Shipton), 16mo., 321 pp.
- How To Be Saved, 16mo., 127 pp.
- Words to a Young Communicant, (Jas. W. Alexander), 16mo., 104 pp.
- Morning and Night Watches, (Macduff), 16mo.
- Historical Illust'ns of Truth of Old Testament, (Rawlinson), 16mo., 216 pp.
- Life of Father Taylor, of Boston, 12mo., 375 pp.
- Wee Davie, (McLeod), 16mo., 86 pp.
- A Candle Lighted of the Lord, 16mo., 228 pp.
- Through a Needle's Eye, (Hesba Stretton), 12mo., 433 pp.
- Joe's Partner, (Aunt Friendly), Nat. Temperance Soc., 128 pp.
- The King's Ferry Boat, (J. N. Norton), 16mo., 400 pp.
- Stepping Heavenward, (Mrs. Prentiss), 12mo., 426 pp.
- Gospel Hymns, with tunes, (Bliss & Sankey), 12mo., 112 pp.
- Christian Almanac, (Am. Tract Soc.), 1878.
- Christy's Old Organ, (Spanish), 16mo., 183 pp.
- Pilgrim's Progress, (Swedish), 16mo., 270 pp.
- Nelson on Infidelity, (German), 12mo., 360 pp.
- Method of Grace, (Danish), 16mo., 175 pp.
- History of the United States, (Lossing), 12mo., 424 pp.
- Kilpatrick and Our Cavalry, 12mo., 245 pp.
- Stories of English History, 16mo., 216 pp.
- Scott's Poems, 12mo., 410 pp.
- Storm Warriors, or Heroism of the Goodwin Sands, (Gilmore), 12mo., 358 pp.
- Recent Polar Voyages, 12mo., 345 pp., 61 cuts.
- Book of Golden Deeds, (Miss Yonge), 16mo., 466 pp.
- Wonderful Mountain Adventures, 16mo., 320 pp., illust'd.
- Land and Sea, India, 16mo., 111 pp., 36 cuts.
- “ “ The Ocean, 16mo., 110 pp., 33 cuts.
- “ “ The Frozen North, 110 pp., 30 cuts.
- Macauley's Life and Letters, (Trevelyan), two vols. in one, 12mo., 307, 311 pp.
- Planetary and Stellar Worlds, (Mitchell), 12mo., 305 pp., 17 plates.
- Johnson's Dictionary, 24mo., 320 pp.
- Warren's Intermediate Geography and Atlas, 4to.

## HOW TO SEND A LIBRARY TO SEA.

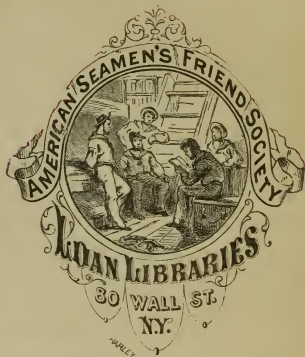
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Enclose TWENTY DOLLARS, in Check, Post Office Money Order, or in other safe way, to order of

**TREASURER AMERICAN SEAMEN'S FRIEND SOCIETY**

80 WALL STREET, NEW YORK.

Give the name and post office address of the contributor, and an assignment of a new library, with the name of the vessel upon which it is placed, destination, &c., will be made, and notice thereof sent to the donor.









(Nov., 1891, 20,000)

# BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY.

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One volume allowed at a time, and obtained only by card; to be kept 14 days (or seven days in the case of fiction and juvenile books published within one year) without fine; not to be renewed; to be reclaimed by messenger after 21 days, who will collect 25 cents besides fine of 2 cents a day, including Sundays and holidays; not to be lent out of the borrower's household, and not to be transferred; to be returned at this Hall.

